

The Thread and the Beads

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THERE is an increasingly manifested desire on the part of many thinkers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to have an answer to the question: "What has traditional Scholastic philosophy to offer to the modern mind?" Unfortunately, there has been engendered in the minds of many a sense of aloofness from reality, of an idealistic aprioricity inherent in the philosophy of the Schoolmen which quite blunts its effectiveness. We ourselves are often puzzled to know just how much we can contribute to the solution of present-day problems.

We Scholastic thinkers and the non-Scholastic thinkers, above all the men and women "in the field," both see the problems, but our viewpoints are quite different, our approaches quite diametrically opposite. We are largely deductivists; they inductivists. We enter the house of learning, if you will, by the front door; they, by the back door. Surely, since it is a house and not a labyrinthine maze, we ought to be able to meet at some definite place.

We can. Where? Well, let us see our differing methods of approach. As deductivists we are rather inclined by training to analyze, e. g., human nature as such—*das Ding an sich*. We take it comprehensively, it is true, but stripped of all that makes a Frenchman French, a German German, an Irishman Irish and an American American. *Demptis particularibus* is the motto that sets our intellectual scalpels and even microtomes to work, and cut and pare down we do until "human nature," sheer, stark and unchanging, stands before us. Then we turn it this way and that, and we use our mental stethoscope and sphygmometer to catch its inner reverberations and the pressure of its essential blood-stream, so that we may find an answer to the question: What is this thing, "human nature"? What must it have to be nourished and nurtured unto the fulness of its stature, which is ultimately *moral* stature? What must be

its societal environment—conjugal, domestic, political—in order that it may be rounded out into a complete and creditable whole? What societal conditions, *of their nature*, will stunt its growth and bring on moral dwarfism? What others, *of their nature*, will unduly develop it and bring on acromegaly and all the horrid phenomena of animal gigantism precisely there where intellectual and volitional harmony should reign?

These are the questions answered in our entire philosophy, and answered, therefore, from reason alone. Being such, they can be advanced before any body of men. Revelation has no least proof-value in philosophy. It is to philosophy what the red light on the side of the track is to the engineer. The red light does not add one bit of moving power to the engine, but it does tell the engineer whether the switch be open, whether the siding be clear, or whether further advance would mean collision.

From natural theology, we find that there is a God, the Creator of all things; from cosmology, that God created man for His own glory; from psychology, that this strange thing, man, is "composed of Heaven and mire," composed of matter and of spirit, which is gifted with an intellect that cuts clean through the trappings of things, and with a will that is living and lithe and cannot be whistled to heel unless it wants to come. We learn from ethics that man's final destiny is not in this life nor in the things of time and sense, but in the complete rounding out of his human nature which is "blessedness" and the happiness consequent thereupon; and we find, too, that it is only by the possession of God Himself that this "complete rounding out" can ever be had. From ethics, too, we learn, by analyzing this human nature, in its essential self with all its accretions gone, that man must worship God; that he must respect human life, his own as well as others; that he must, if he chooses to unite, unite in enduring, single wedlock, and have a true care for his children; that, by very inherent, centripetal force of this unadorned nature, he gravitates, with other men, into the larger societal unit we call the State.

Sheer, clear thinking gives us a splendid diagnosis of this thing, "human nature," and thus we have, as deductivists, our panoply of abiding principles with which we can safely go forth to battle with the problems of life.

And what of the inductivists, above all of that valiant army of men and women down in the front-line trenches of field research, habit-forming clinics, behavior study, social-care work? They are not dealing with human nature in itself, but with the actual Frenchman, the actual German, the actual American. They meet the actual starving woman and children whose lives are warped by the drunkenness of an inhuman wretch. They meet the actual rich whose money can buy the sins they want and who reap so visibly at times rich harvest from their waywardness. They meet the ill-matched man and woman who loathe each other and call loudly for leave to be rid of each other that each may find a more congenial partner. They meet the morons who have married and they find children—maybe sane or maybe witless—and they question for a solution of the consequent domestic problems. Facts, facts, facts. That is what they mass up high—“case” upon “case,” each different from the one that went before, each widely afield from the one that follows—and for all the world it seems like a grand cross-word puzzle, with no least clue where to begin and where to end the untangling.

There we have it—the common meeting-ground. They have the facts, the beads; we have the thread, the principles. Their facts are real, so brutally real at times that, when you handle them, you wonder that human nature could become so soiled, so snarled. Our principles are real, and we look in rightful admiration at the rock-ribbed solidity of our position, tried by the storms of ages, yet lifting their Himalayan height serene above the whirl and roar of time-built things.

The inductivists, often by their own admission, are groping towards a philosophy; we have our philosophy but, at times, are too aloof in our handling of facts. There should be a fruitful “meeting of minds,” and that is the thought that comes uppermost as one thinks over the whole situation. We are *not* theorists. We are emphatically realists. We deal with reality, human nature as we find it but stripped of all that individualizes man from man. Our deductions are as real as the residue left in the test tube when all foreign matter has been cast out, for we use the great test tube of the mind, the syllogism, and purify with the white heat of reason. So let us go to the seminar, to the conference table, to the convention, and help thread

the beads of facts until we have truly systematized knowledge, for that and that only is science.

But a word of warning. To thread the beads one must have good, clear mental eyesight, which is none other than straight, clean-cut thinking. That is the one outstanding asset of a man who has stood the gruelling test of years of scholastic training—the ability to define, which means the ability to let people know what they and you are talking about; the power to "distinguish," which is but the connoisseur's discernment, separating the true from the false; the ease to handle and to search out proofs, which is the intelligent vindication of a position.

It is really remarkable what a response such a method of procedure awakens in those not trained in deduction. To "stand tall," and clearly and fearlessly to point out the thread of principle which must guide all in the solution of a vexing problem is the privilege of us who know the ageless philosophy of the Stagirite. Nay more, it is our duty. The attainment of truth brings the responsibility to broadcast that truth; especially so, when men's minds are hungry and their souls starved as they are these days.

We meet the starving everywhere, though at times they hide their hunger behind a bowl of porridge husks. It was a winter's night, and a lecture had been promised down in the heart of New York's ghetto. There in that little settlement house—all of them after a day of work, and many of them just from an evening in school added on to the day's work—these young Jewish boys and girls, mostly in their later 'teens, sat and listened motionless for one hour to a lecture on Evolution. Then, at 10:30 p. m., an open forum began, and for almost an hour these hungry souls "bore in." "Sir, I am the daughter of an orthodox Rabbi. I have read everything in sight. I am not happy. Is there a God?" With upturned, challenging faces, all were tense in their silence. Again "Sir, where is God?" another girl asked, and the lecturer, who was carried back in thought to a gentle mother's side as his infant mind learned to see God everywhere, looked down in pity at the child who had been orphaned of her God.

Again it is a convention in a great eastern State, and our boys and girls between twelve and sixteen have all been openly libeled as being 100 per cent personally and soli-

tarily immoral, and the further shocking advice has been given in conclusion that we must admit the phenomenon and just caution a care for health. A chill of horror runs almost visibly through the men and women, all trained social workers, but none makes answer. Then from an old non-Catholic, quite pleadingly: "Will one of the reverend clergy here present, please tell us something." Still no one arose. But finally answer was made: a denial of the statement as far as Catholic boys and girls were concerned; a definition and an explanation of the "norm of morality," which after all is but the alignment of our actions with that standard which we hold to be the supreme standard of our lives; an accusing finger pointed at those who allowed, in the name of "art," improper shows and dances, and yet did not let boys and girls plead "art" when they were arrested for doing the very things to which they had been openly provoked; a challenge to be logical—either to stop meeting in yearly conventions to discuss juvenile sex delinquency, or to go back home and clean up the stage and the movie and the dance-hall.

Again, a definition of free will, an admission of graded freedom and consequently of graded responsibility, will do much to set minds aright on the problems of delinquency, especially where mental deficiency is present. It will help to make headway against the determinists of the milder sort, when they clearly understand that freedom of will does not mean the freedom to walk through a brick wall if I make up my mind to do so. They will not be so impatient of our position, if they know that we admit a freedom in action ranging from zero to a hundred, from necessitated action up to perfect freedom. One of the foremost probation officers of the country said a few years back: "Father, if I could get a man, who knew the doctrine of free will, as you have explained it, to collaborate with me on a book, we could swing the methodology of probation for the next twenty-five years."

There is the field ripe unto the harvest—and yet are we making the effort we should to garner it? It is useless to adopt an "I-won't-play-with-you" attitude. It is folly to stay away and then, when movements are started or laws are passed which outrage right reason, to raise a hue and cry like dogs that stand on their hind legs howling into the night. It is for us to get in and prevent the

darkness from coming on by giving of "the light of reason" which is ours. And that light of reason will usually be most welcomed, for—barring a few warped minds—its vitalizing light will come gladdeningly into many a darkened corner and will awaken therein a thrill of life that had long been chilled. Most men are natively sincere and the world-old truths fit squarely and snugly on sincerity, and when they see the beads of their finding threaded into a chain of knowledge that will adorn mankind, they are truly and properly grateful. Only—we must have the thread.

Law and Reason

HON. ERNEST E. L. HAMMER

Selection from address given to the graduates of Fordham University Law School, June 11, 1929

EVERY system of legal philosophy, however, whether the obligation to obey is recognized to arise out of the command of superior authority, or stated to spring from reason alone, or out of some other internal or external impelling force inclusive or exclusive of reason, has unquestionably recognized that only those regulations are binding which are in accord with reason and advantageous to the common good.

Laws must be reasonable and for the common welfare, otherwise they are unjust and immoral and their enforcement is tyranny. It is clearly error and fallacious to assert that any statutory law, simply because it has been enacted by duly constituted authority, should be strictly and vigorously enforced as a means of determining whether or not it is good or bad law.

Many laws are unenforceable and remain unenforced because they are unreasonable, unjust, immoral or foolish, and in consequence contrary to public welfare. Rigid enforcement of a law may result in speedy demonstration that it is bad law and also in its modification or repeal. Such a result or end, however, does not justify the tyranny of enforcement, or means used in reaching such end. Law, in and of itself, quite apart from enforcement or attempts in

that direction, is either right or wrong. If right, it should be enforced. If wrong, it should be modified or repealed.

This philosophy which I have outlined to you as the foundation and framework of the system of legal education which you have received has inspired fidelity and zeal in the law-makers and interpreters, the exponents, leaders and protectors of equality of rights under law for free and independent peoples throughout history. Guided by and mindful of this philosophy let us observe its beneficent influence upon the form and structure of our laws and jurisprudence.

The Common Law or general laws or regulations, based upon usages of the people running beyond the memory of man, together with the decisions of the courts, are distinguished from the written or statutory law but may, of course, be expressed in or declared by statute. Thus is distinguished the Common Law of England which is our Common Law. Such Common Law was first compiled and published by King Alfred the Great in his "Domebook" or "Liber Judicialis." This famous book began with the Ten Commandments. Following were many Mosaic precepts. Then came the statement of Christ in the Gospel: "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." Next were quoted the canons of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem. The commandment, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them," was then set forth. This was followed by the admonition, "From this one doom, a man may remember, that he judge every one righteously, he need heed no other doombook." The laws or immemorial usages were then collated. As so written they survived in the main the influences and assaults of the Danish and Saxon systems of law, and were with such modifications as were affected in them, codified and digested by King Edward the Confessor, promulgated by him and universally observed. These general laws or Common Law also in the main survived the Norman invasion.

For the protection of purely human interests in the award of damages for civil wrong, the delivery of land or chattels wrongly withheld from rightful owners, and the punishment for criminal offences, the common law courts of England, applying these principles of the Common Law and inspired and guided by its philosophy, were effective.

Equitable titles, and remedies for breach thereof, injunctions for prevention of threatened wrong, specific performance, and other equitable relief, were unknown.

These reliefs were supplied under the Norman Kings, through petitions addressed to the King, by royal prerogative exercised through a Lord Chancellor. (The petition was understood to be addressed to the King's conscience and the Chancellor was known as the keeper thereof.) Out of this procedure grew the great Court of Chancery. The relief administered was so ample as to provide remedy for all wrongs not covered by jurisdiction of the law courts. Again it will be noted that conscience, and reason, dictating that many individual rights must be curtailed because of unreasonable interference with the rights of others, are also the keystones in the philosophy of equitable jurisprudence.

With the establishment of English Colonies in America, the English legal system, including the judicial principles, laws, and regulations both legal and equitable, was adopted and acted upon. Thus came to America and later to each State of the Union not only law and equity, but the philosophy thereof about which we have been speaking. The only exception is the State of Louisiana. There the Civil Law of Rome (transmitted through the Spanish and French influences) has been maintained, although modified by principles of English jurisprudence through legislation. The same philosophy of law, nevertheless, is the underlying substance upon which such Civil Law is moulded.

This philosophy was behind the demand and determination expressed in the Magna Charta or Great Charter of 1215, that Englishmen were to be ruled by law and tradition based upon reason and for the common welfare and not by the unreasonable or arbitrary will of the Sovereign or supreme power. This charter or its basic principle was so sacred to the English that they required it enacted into some six statutes and insisted on its confirmation by their Kings some thirty times.

In 1628, in the reign of Charles I, the King, in the exercise of what he termed his prerogative, had enforced many harsh measures, and extorted much money by taxes and loans, with imprisonment for refusal, from his nobles and the common people. The result was the passage of the law known as "The Petition of Right." Here again, based upon the philosophy of which we have been speaking, although

Parliament was in religion intolerant and bigoted, it was declared that the English have ever been free, have been governed by law and an ancient constitution, and privileges founded on the Great Charter must remain in force because derived from a source of never-failing authority, the sacred contract between King and people.

Again this philosophy dictated the passage, in October, 1689, of the Bill of Rights which, although it placed certain restrictions by reason of their religion upon some, again declared the principles of government and the rights, liberties and privileges of subjects.

More particularly this philosophy was responsible for the law, "A Declaration of Rights," drafted by George Mason and adopted by the Virginia Convention in 1776, in which, in addition to setting forth the principles of government and defining the rights and liberties of the people, it was stated: "All men are entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." The liberties defined and contained in this declaration constitute the foundation of republican government. A Declaration of Rights is incorporated in the United States Constitution as well as in the Constitutions of most of the States.

This philosophy is the dominant theme and spiritual note of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. These documents are the epitome of the wisdom of the ages in the principles of government and the rights and liberties of human beings. The sanction of, and obligation under, Divinity is recognized. The purpose of government is defined, and government and law are made reasonably subject and subservient to the protection and fulfilment of individual rights and the common or general welfare. The declaration states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." It ends with a

prayer and pledge, "For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." The Preamble to the Constitution is: "We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." This philosophy also is the inspiration in the development of American Law. It is the soul of the decisions and teachings of Marshall, Taney, Story, Cooley, Kent, Shaw, Gibson, Ruffin and White, as well as a host of other distinguished American jurists and teachers. It is the essence and substance of your training and legal education in this great university.

Much has been said in recent years in criticism and condemnation of law, procedure and practice, of courts, judges and lawyers. No doubt a measure thereof was founded in fact. A number of statutes are antiquated. Systems of jurisprudence ancient in origin and moving slowly with the weight of age should be given new vigor and impetus by the infusion of new modes, improvements and accommodations suitable to modern manners and customs of the time and people. In my talk to you I have pointed out what the public demands in respect to moral, educational and cultural qualifications of lawyers.

Recently investigation of the activities of certain lawyers exposed many evils, improprieties and some criminal acts, and uncovered the existence and growth over a long period of time of a system of legal practice calculated to destroy the ethical standards of the profession. This brought severe criticism and condemnation from the press and tended to jeopardize the high position and standing in public esteem traditionally held by lawyers. But despite an impression among laymen to the contrary the ideals of the profession have not been lost.

In New York the Bar Associations and members of the Bar acted in concert to stamp out the existing evils, and moved the Supreme Court to an investigation and reform of the dangerous conditions complained of, and in close co-operation with the Court brought about reform and erected safeguards against future recurrence. Thus the Bar

through autonomous disciplinary action has been restored to its ancient and honorable standing and position.

I venture the statement that the real basic trouble is not alone the things criticized and condemned but also and principally the rejection of the true philosophy and acceptance of the false. It has taken ages to ascertain the truth, and with it has come freedom and liberty to individuals. If we permit ourselves to be lured away by pleasant-sounding theories we may again lose all and be forced to struggle for centuries to regain rights now ours through a system of law and jurisprudence built upon a true philosophy. Change and improvement are necessary. Watchfulness and vigilance are equally necessary, in order that progress and not retrogression may result. To you who are just coming to the Bar I commend this thought for your earnest and continued consideration.

Firmly grounded, therefore, in the law and legal principles inculcated by your course of instruction at Fordham, guided and inspired by the philosophy of the law with which you have been in constant contact, both in the teachings and actual lives of the faculty, and imbued with the true conception of the high ideals of the legal profession, I am sure each of you will be successful in your chosen work. Many will become leaders of the Bar, a number come some day to adorn the Bench, and others occupy positions of importance in public and private life.

This is my sincere wish, my ardent hope for each of you on this, your great day of achievement at Fordham University.

The Sphere of the Catholic Graduate

REV. JOHN K. SHARP

Baccalaureate sermon delivered at the Commencement exercises of St. Joseph's College, Brooklyn, June 9, 1929

IN the third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, we read these words: "I pray . . . that he would grant you . . . to know the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge."

The last days of an academic career stand at the parting of the ways. There is about them, consequently, a moving solemnity, a tenderness of feeling, and surely a holy consecration, as eager, confident youth steps from the scholastic halls into the arena of life, to follow there its golden visions, to realize at long last its precious dreams.

Those who hold you dear, your parents, your professors, your Church—and you, yourselves—cannot but ponder the significance of it all. It is my privilege to gather and to express, as best I may, the common thoughts and sentiments of this time. Their general burden is nothing new, it is a reassertion of the old truths: Catholic higher education and the opportunities and responsibilities its begets.

Education is a general topic in our land today. We have education, public and private, in terms of billions of dollars; and education has become a very fetish. It is regarded as the corrective for our social ills; its is hoped it will emancipate men from the outworn, unprogressive creeds, making them more efficient servants of the machine age. And so, there is education for democracy, education for social success, education for culture. Much of it is an education conceived, not as a discipline to improve the instruments of the mind, of the soul, as an absorption, a growth from within,—but rather as an accretion, a growth from without—a wholesale education often beyond moral and mental capacity, an education that confers diplomas on some *magna cum laude* and often on others *mirabile dictu*.

Now the current of educational thought outside the Church today runs in two broad streams. The one, of the

so-called scientific view, regards man merely as "an amoeba with acquirements" and God as the product of man's consciousness. Its fruits are, naturally, a ruthless materialism. The other theory glorifies the humanities; it is a purely liberal dilettantism of sweetness and light. It regards vice as unbecoming, and virtue as graceful conduct. It proclaims the gentleman's religion of esthetic naturalism.

Each system denies the traditional; each views life as meaningless of itself. And between them, as a critic has said, we and our institutions are but pieces—pawns and castles—in a crazy game of cosmic chess, played with no rules, between a mad chemist and the ghost of a wild poet.

"By their fruits you shall know them." For we live, as a consequence, amid influences alien and inimical to the spirit of Catholicism: under the political theory of material prosperity, the philosophy of skepticism, the religion of indifference, the social ethics of paganism, the worship of the dynamo, the morality of the machine age, the omnipotence of science, the theater of marital infidelity, the biography of the *libido*, the novel of the philanderer—and the end is not yet.

The Church, on the contrary, views life not as a blind, ineffectual struggle, nor as an opiate dream, but simply as the path to eternity. She orders her education accordingly. If men would seek a classical expression of her policy, if they would know the true significance of a baccalaureate degree, they will find it, as surely you have long since, in Cardinal Newman's "Idea of a University"—"that so eminently wise book to be bound by the young student for a frontlet on his brow and as a talisman on his writing wrist."

The Church gives the one true philosophy of life, for she reconciles science with religion, and liberal culture with both science and religion. She promotes a religious education where the intellect may range with utmost freedom and where religion will enjoy an equal freedom. She holds that virtue can be intellectual, that goodness and conscientiousness can be truly great. She erects within the same academic walls the altar of faith and the chemical laboratory; she seeks to create in the same personalities able thinkers and loyal children. She wants intellectual laymen to be religious, and devout ecclesiastics to be intellectual.

Confronted with the materialistic concept of education, she says that mere secular knowledge is not enough, for

religious doctrine is also knowledge. The study of the Creator belongs to any institution which claims to teach all branches of knowledge. Divorce this fundamental knowledge of God and you injure the whole; your educational system is simply unphilosophical.

The second theory seeks culture as an end in itself, but the beautiful and the artistic are only handmaids, the exterior embellishments of religion. The Church is not oblivious to natural beauty, but she knows, as so many modern poets and artists do not, that beauty come through channels of sense is inferior; that unrestrained devotion to it leads men away from beauty in its more perfect manifestation, the deathless beauty of character and of service to God. All truly great thinkers from Augustine to Newman have come through the service of the culture they thought true wisdom, to find and love God. They have come, oh, so painfully, to that plenitude and harmony of truth and beauty and goodness, possessed by you from the start, in letters and science and religion.

Fortunate you! What return may we not expect from that investment, your preparation for life? Yet into that maelstrom of life the graduates of our schools disappear, year after year. And when we call the roster, we find too many lounge in pleasant dalliance, guided by the clichés of the world, neglectful of that Catholic heritage which once gave us so much hope and promise in them. Too few are they, the very ornament of our faith and philosophy, who minister generously to the Catholic cause. When shall we see in *all* our graduates such a fine tradition of service? When shall the educated Catholics of this country influence the non-Catholic leaders of thought and action as our Catholic brethren do in Europe?

Two recent instances come to mind. Recently first prizes were awarded for the best Catholic books of last year: a novel, a book of general character, and a book of a religious nature. The recipients were, respectively, two non-Catholics, and a Religious since dead. Quantitatively and qualitatively there is almost no such thing as Catholic letters in America. Again the charge is made that we have too few Catholics among the recognized research workers in the experimental sciences. And until there is more scientific investigation by Catholic scholars, we must still refute the old charge that the Church is opposed to science by

pointing to the magnificent work done by the Catholic scientists of a former day.

The distinguished Danish convert, Jørgensen, complained in his day of this very state. He consoled himself with the thought that we have educated the character rather than the feelings and imagination; and that, while modern Catholicism is not brilliantly intellectual, it does show its strength in charity, in possessing the true human spirit that rests in God. Yet while we, also, may be consoled with this thought, we should not be content until we, too, as our Catholic forbears, make a distinctive mark upon our contemporary civilization in the sciences and humanities.

Meanwhile, and perhaps of more immediate usefulness, are the questions: how shall we show our strength in charity; and how shall we know if we possess the true human spirit that rests in God. How, but in doing the works of Catholic Action besought us today by the Holy Father? Catholic Action needs your talent and your leadership. Happily, in our colleges, student movements grow, to foster missions, literature and charities. In a neighboring college, sister to your own, the students have organized group lectures and debates before women's clubs and sodalities. Some from your own student body are doing settlement work and teaching religion to neglected children. Your own alumnae, as well as the International Federation, with their splendid programs should certainly enlist your active participation. Finally, our parish sodalities, which should serve surely as training schools for Catholic lay action, filled with eager young women emerging from their 'teens and drawn from every social stratum, are entitled to look to you for active membership and constant leadership. "The strong shall help the weak."

But, my dear graduates, your real greatness, as well as your real sphere of influence, is to be found, not so much in studies, in learning, and in social work, but within yourselves, in the high character of your womanliness. "All the beauty of the king's daughter is within." The mission of woman has ever been civilization in its highest sense. There is your career, whether in the world, in the convent, or in the home. Women have ever been regarded as the conscience of the race, as ever more capable of good than man, and more capable of evil. This is not only my opinion. It is a tradition of the race. You have seen it

religious doctrine is also knowledge. The study of the Creator belongs to any institution which claims to teach all branches of knowledge. Divorce this fundamental knowledge of God and you injure the whole; your educational system is simply unphilosophical.

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The distinguished Danish convert, Jörgensen, complained in his day of this very state. He consoled himself with the thought that we have educated the character rather than the feelings and imagination; and that, while modern Catholicism is not brilliantly intellectual, it does show its strength in charity, in possessing the true human spirit that rests in God. Yet while we, also, may be consoled with this thought, we should not be content until we, too, as our Catholic forbears, make a distinctive mark upon our contemporary civilization in the sciences and humanities.

Meanwhile, and perhaps of more immediate usefulness, are the questions: how shall we show our strength in charity; and how shall we know if we possess the true human spirit that rests in God. How, but in doing the works of Catholic Action besought us today by the Holy Father? Catholic Action needs your talent and your leadership. Happily, in our colleges, student movements grow, to foster missions, literature and charities. In a neighboring college, sister to your own, the students have organized group lectures and debates before women's clubs and sodalities. Some from your own student body are doing settlement work and teaching religion to neglected children. Your own alumnae, as well as the International Federation, with their splendid programs should certainly enlist your active participation. Finally, our parish sodalities, which should serve surely as training schools for Catholic lay action, filled with eager young women emerging from their 'teens and drawn from every social stratum, are entitled to look to you for active membership and constant leadership. "The strong shall help the weak."

But, my dear graduates, your real greatness, as well as your real sphere of influence, is to be found, not so much in studies, in learning, and in social work, but within yourselves, in the high character of your womanliness. "All the beauty of the king's daughter is within." The mission of woman has ever been civilization in its highest sense. There is your career, whether in the world, in the convent, or in the home. Women have ever been regarded as the conscience of the race, as ever more capable of good than man, and more capable of evil. This is not only my opinion. It is a tradition of the race. You have seen it

expressed in Aeschylus and Euripides; in Dante and in Homer, whose women are much better than his men; in Ruskin and in Shakespeare, who has no heroes but many heroines. And I read confirmation and beautiful illustration of both the idea of service and the influence of woman, in the eulogy uttered recently over a distinguished Catholic scholar. Shortly after his marriage he had confided to his wife that he had dedicated his life to the cause of truth, of the Catholic religion. And it was his wife, he had said, who had been his greatest inspiration.

Your college days are over. Before you opens out your particular vision of effort and success. Within you burns the holy flame of the Catholic spirit. We think we see about you the aura of consecration to the Catholic cause.

Alma Mater, your college and your Church, has taught you "to discriminate the precious from the vile, beauty from sin, truth from sophistry, the innocent from the poisonous." Today she sends you forth as once she received you. But now there is a wistful tenderness in her benediction, a holy pride and hope in her glance. And she entrusts her interpretation, nay, her very self, to you. You will not fail her. You cannot. Surely she will hear again of you with ever-increasing joy.

Now you begin to embroider on the garment of your life the patterns she taught you to love. Keep your soul, serve your God, your country and your Church. Remember, you merely prepare for another, the all-important commencement; you do but strive for another, an imperishable accolade. Till then, may the God of your youth be your constant strength, your unfailing inspiration.

The Next Reform—Sterilization

RT. REV. MSGR. T. A. NEWSOME

An article by the founder and administrator of the Besford Court Catholic Mental Welfare Hospital for Children, Worcestershire, England. Reprinted from the Christian Democrat, published by the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford

DAY by day the papers contain quaint little paragraphs about mental defect, its treatment and prevention. Usually these paragraphs are reports of meetings of local authorities. They are so precisely similar that they can be reduced to a type. The Press Association is at liberty to re-

print this specimen and to issue it to their subscribers—the names only will need altering.

Mr. Dumbell drew the attention of the Council to the alarming rate at which mental defect is spreading like a plague throughout the country. The disease, he said, is sapping the intellectual vigor of the race and, unless drastic preventive measures are taken, will speedily reduce us to a C-3 nation. Already their area, although dealing with only a quarter of its defectives, was spending annually many thousands of pounds—money which is badly needed for road improvement. He recommended the sterilization of all those likely to have defective children and the segregation of every defective person in the area.

Mr. Bonehead supported the speaker and said that such a policy if carried out thoroughly would relieve the rates of what had become an intolerable burden.

To those who know anything at all about the mental-deficiency problem (which indeed is the least of all problems and not worthy of the name of "problem") the foregoing is not merely nonsense, it is simply a mess of words. It has just that veneer of reason which often covers the remembered fragments of incoherent dream talk. Let us take Mr. Dumbell's points in order:

1. Mental defect is not a disease. It is not even a pathological entity. It is a sociological term implying that a person's total mental make-up is such that he cannot hold his own in society as it is today. The causes from which this disability may arise are very many. Mental defect may be congenital or it may be the result of an accident or an illness. It may arise from an unstable and unbalanced character or from the absence or under-development of certain mental qualities or from a combination of both these factors.

It is, moreover, a negative conception like that of the inability to run which, like mental defect, arises from a variety of causes such as "housemaid's knee," absence of legs, paralysis, etc. It is, moreover, a relative term and not absolute, as we shall see later on.

2. In spite of what Mr. Dumbell says, the disease is not spreading like a plague. It is no more contagious or infectious than a glass eye. But the proportions of the defectives in the population (which is probably what the speaker tried to say) may *seem* to be increasing—but for the following reasons:

(a) There is today a much better ascertainment of

cases. A large number of overworked school medical officers are beginning to use the Binet-Simon tests and to discover a thing which has always existed—the spectrum of the distribution of intelligence. At one end of that spectrum is genius, at the other end utter idiocy. But the intermediate grades are all there—though the less obvious ones were unnoticed in the past. Microbes existed before the microscope. Better ascertainment has called for suitable care and education for these higher-grade defectives. All this means money—hence the alarm in bumbledom.

(b) The raising of the industrial and social efficiency line has necessarily increased the number of persons found beneath it. For as mental defect is a sociological concept it is therefore relative. A man may be normal in the country but mentally defective in a factory. Life tends to get more strenuous. Even the village idiot requires more care today—on account of motor cars.

The cry that the germ-plasm has been vitiated may be dismissed. There is no evidence. If it were, the removal of the conditions which caused its degeneration—bad housing—lack of fresh air—under-nourishment—unsuitable dietary—would speedily enable it to re-establish itself. The germ-plasm has survived things even worse than industrialism. Nature has her own way of ending a bad strain by the processes of ante-dating and of concentration of unfavorable neuronic determinants in a *few* of the offspring in order that the remainder may be free of them. Mental defect in one generation may show itself as profound idiocy in the next, so the strain ends with unexpected abruptness.

Now for Mr. Dumbell's remedies. The segregation of all defectives in large institutions or colonies is a panic policy abandoned over ten years ago by all serious thinkers. Its cost would be ruinous even to America. It will also be noticed that Mr. Dumbell is not quite clear as to what the word *segregation* means. Apparently he fancies it is something which one could buy in a bottle at the chemist's shop. He does not realize that it implies institutional care and maintenance and that he is really advocating on a much larger scale the same expenditure which he is deplored as inimical to the best interests of motorists. The Americans, who are far ahead of us in their studies of this problem, are agreed that the best and most economical policy is to keep as many defectives as possible in the community, and there

to provide them with adequate protection and training and even partial maintenance.

"Very well," Mr. Dumbell will reply, "by all means—but sterilize them." Before replying let us classify and thus clarify.

Mental defectives may be grouped conveniently into the following categories:

1. *Idiots and Imbeciles.* These must be cared for either privately in their families or, as generally is the case, in a special institution. Their sex instincts are either extremely feeble or entirely absent. It would certainly be a waste of time to sterilize them. The females need protection, it is true—but they need that protection from the normal-minded but immoral man who may, if not hindered, be a source of expense to the ratepayer.

2. *The Low-Grade Medium Defective.* He is of considerably higher mentality than the foregoing but can never earn his own living even under supervision and kindly conditions in normal life. He will remain mentally a little child all his life, but may be taught simple occupations in a colony home. In such a home, keeping the sexes apart is a mere question of architecture and administration.

3. *The High-Grade Moron.* This type appears in the spectrum of mental defect higher up than the low-grade and before we reach the manual-minded child, the child with a special defect, or the backward child. The great majority of morons are well-behaved, docile and useful. But everything depends upon the training they are given. They do willingly and contentedly many of the simpler, more monotonous, and yet essential tasks that the person with higher intelligence would not undertake. It is for this reason that expenditure of public money for their training is well worth while. If, then, the character of the high-grade moron is stabilized and his slender abilities realized to the utmost, money spent on his education is profitable to the State. But he needs to have that training in a Residential Welfare Hospital. Besford Court will get no further advertisement in this article.

The only good that can come out of this agitation is to focus the limelight of public interest on the pathetic little figure of the moron and to cheer him with the warmth of public sympathy. Misunderstood from the earliest years, treated contemptuously by his companions, neglected by his

teachers, spoilt by his parents, he grows up cowed, untaught, incapable, wayward, and undisciplined. But he has an ever-developing anti-social grudge. Later, if neglected, he will take his revenge on society. The paths of least resistance are the downhill trails that he will follow and they lead to the workhouse and the prison. The cost of his education has been saved but at the cost, probably, of his life-long maintenance by the nation. The same is true of the female moron, but you will find her also in the maternity home and the Lock Hospital. But men of normal intelligence have sent her there.

Now, Mr. Dumbell, shall we sterilize the moron and all those who are liable to have defective children? I beg of you to remember, first of all, that defectives are in a large number of cases the children of normal parents. Remember also that though in the male the operation is simple, in the female it requires a highly skilled surgeon and is fraught with danger to life. If your wife's next baby is defective, will you and she gladly submit yourselves to this operation? Or is your suggestion only intended for the poor and defenseless?

Sterilization will not help the poor defective to maintain himself, nor will your efficient surgical service make up to him for your educational neglect. Does your anxiety for your own security and his helplessness justify your maiming him who has committed no wrong? Have you forgotten that the law of God and nature protects not merely the life but also the limb of the innocent?

Look at it from this point of view and you will realize what wickedness you and your friend Mr. Bonehead have been talking. A pogrom is not a poor-law and a Thug (though he might save you a lot of money to spend on roads) is not a suitable Relieving Officer. You have neither sense, nor science, nor sensibility, on your side.